A

LETTER

FROM

CAPTAIN JOSEPH PRICE,

TO

PHILIP FRANCIS, Esq.

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LATE A MEMBER

OF THE

SUPREME COUNCIL AT BENGAL.

LONDON:
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A
LETTER, &c.

SIR,

THE desire of doing me that mischief in Europe which you failed of doing in India, induced you to permit to remain on the face of the East India Company's records, personal reflections relating to me, which are false, malicious, and groundless; *and which no man, who has the least pretensions to the character of a gentleman, would have suffered to remain, after he had commissioned a third person to retract the assertions in his name.*

ON the day that I was to leave Calcutta for Europe, a gentleman informed me, that it was commonly talked of in town, that Mr. Philip Francis had made very severe reflections on my character and conduct, in a minute which a few days before he had delivered in at the Council Board: the

particulars I knew not, nor had I a right to controvert your ſentiments of my conduct as an officer acting under the orders of the Board (of which you were a member,) whilſt you adhered to truth in your remarks, and avoided perſonality. My time was very ſhort—I had no means of obtaining a copy of your minute, nor knew I clearly what your obſervations led to. In this ſituation I accidentally met with your friend, Mr Shore; to him I related what I had heard, and acquainted him that I had no inducement to go to Europe, but under the hope that the certificate which I had received from the aſſignees appointed by my general creditors, might induce the claimants at home, to ſign the deeds of my general ſurrender and releaſe, as all thoſe in India had done; and to obtain from the Eaſt India Company ſome permanent appointment in their employment abroad, in conſideration of the many ſervices rendered them by myſelf and family, in the long courſe of thirty years reſidence at their ſeveral Preſidencies in India. That if any poſition in your minute, led directly to injure me in either of thoſe two points, or reflected on my conduct as a man of honour, or as an officer, I would not leave the kingdom until you had retracted your aſſertions.

Mr. Shore voluntarily propoſed waiting on you on the ſubject, with a kindneſs which implied a deſire to ſerve both parties, and the next morning

I re-

I received a letter from him, which informed me, that in the course of a late debate at the Board, you had uſed ſome expreſſions, for which you had no authority; but that on Mr. Barwell and the Governor General's obſerving that ſuch animadverſions, grounded only on the vague evidence of common report, were unjuſt, and too perſonal to ſtand as arguments, you had retracted them, and they were done away.

WHAT was I to conclude from ſuch a letter, but that every thing that you had aſſerted againſt me, that was merely perſonal, or that might poſſibly be falſe, had been eraſed from the proceedings of the Board?—No ſuch thing! They were permitted to be entered up FAIR on the Company's records, and three months afterwards were tranſmitted to Europe.

I SHALL quote ſuch part of your remarks as was evidently intended to injure me with the Company, and my private creditors; and anſwer them with truth and integrity; to both of which I will prove, before I cloſe this Letter, that you have paid very little regard.

THE firſt of your obſervations ſtands recorded in the following words.

" I REALLY do not know what ſervices Captain " Price has performed. I never heard that the

 " veſſel

" veſſel under his command, did any ſervices, or
" had an opportunity to do any."

Had this remark of yours been dictated by the ſpirit of truth, the latter part of it would have been apology ſufficient; for no man can do, what he never had an opportunity of doing. But you knew otherwiſe, and made the remark in the bitterneſs of malice, contrary to poſitive proof then before you, and to the internal conviction of your own mind. To deny, with any hopes of obtaining credit, this charge of want of candour in you, with reſpect to me, you muſt prove that you had never ſeen nor heard of certain letters from the King's Admiral and the Preſidency of Madraſs, addreſſed to the Governor General and Council of Bengal; in which, as I have heard, (for I never ſaw them) they expreſs in the ſtrongeſt terms poſſible, their approbation of the conduct of Captains Price and Hicks, and enumerate many important pieces of ſervice, which they had rendered the Company during their being on the coaſt with their ſhips. It is not unlikely, conſidering your education and well-known principles, that you looked on thoſe letters as matters of perſonal favor, obtained by my application to Sir Edward Vernon, and Sir Thomas Rumbold. Almoſt in the preſence of thoſe gentlemen, I tell you, that I never did apply for them, nor did I know that ſuch papers exiſted until long after I had parted with thoſe gentlemen on the

the coaſt. I had the intereſt of the ſervice at heart, and purſued it with the warmth of an Engliſhman; leaving my actions to defend my character, neither ſtooping to beg recommendations, nor apprehending the inſidious malice of a man, baſe enough to aſſert a falſity with confidence, but not brave enough to defend it; who, when he is taxed on the ſpot by the perſon he injures, retracts his falſehoods, and, when that perſon leaves the country, re-aſſerts them to the Court of Directors.

But to put it paſt a doubt, that you had information of the effectual ſervices rendered by the ſhips under my command, I ſhall trouble you with a copy of a paper which I ſent to the Board, ſoon after my return to Bengal, in order to obviate ſome idle reports, which I little thought originated from Mr. Francis.

" On the 23d of July, I received an order from " the Board, to take charge of the honourable " Company's ſhip Reſolution; ſhe was then on " the ways, ſheathed only on one ſide, her main " maſt ſprung, bowſprit rotten, no orlop deck, no " magazine; her lower deck ports to cut out, " and twenty carriages to make, for as many " eighteen pounders. On the 24th, I received " another order from the Board, to take charge " of the Royal Charlotte. My knowledge of the " experience, activity, and ſpirit of Captain Hicks,

" induced

" induced me to recommend him to the command " of the Refolution; as I knew he would pay the " neceffary attention to the equipment of the fhip, " whilft I prepared the Royal Charlotte. This " latter was built for a merchantman, had juft ar- " rived from a voyage laden with fix hundred tons " of falt and other goods, all of which was to be " taken out, before the carpenters could go to " work; and fhe had much more work to be done " than the Refolution. The feafon of the year was " very unfavourable; it rained almoft continually; " neverthelefs, both fhips were compleatly fitted, " well-manned, furnifhed with provifion and ftores " for three months, and each mounted with forty- " four pieces of cannon, carrying 24, 18, and 12 " pound balls. They proceeded down the river the " 28th of Auguft, left the pilot the 10th of Sep- " tember, and joined Commodore Sir Edward Ver- " non's fquadron on the 30th of the fame month, " in Pondicherry Road; here both fhips continued " until the 20th of October, when the place having " furrendered, they were ordered out on a cruize, " under the command of Captain Panton, in his " Majefty's fhip Seahorfe, in queft of fome French " fhips which had lately appeared on the coaft. " After cruifing a month without fuccefs, the " Royal Charlotte received fome damage to the " iron work of her rudder, and was obliged to put " into Point de Galé, where fhe continued feven- " teen days to refit, and then put to fea on the

" 11th of December, and cruized between Dundra-
" head and the Baffes on the coaft of Zelone. On
" this ftation fhe fell in with the Company's fhip
" the Morfe, and after having conducted her into
" Point de Galé, returned again to her ftation,
" where fhe fpoke with feveral country fhips,
" bound to the gulfs, and other parts of India.
" On the 3d of January fhe came again to Galé,
" with his Majefty's fhip the Afia, and Company's
" fhip Royal Admiral, where, giving to Captain
" Vandeput an account of the ftate of affairs in
" India, and every affiftance in our power, we re-
" turned to our former ftation, and cruized until
" the 25th of January, when being joined by Sir
" Edward Vernon in his Majefty's fhip Rippon,
" accompanied by the Seahorfe and Coventry fri-
" gates, we returned with them, for the third time,
" to Point de Galé. The Refolution having got
" back form the firft cruize into Trincomaly,
" was from thence difpatched by Captain Marlow,
" into the Straits of Malacca, to convoy over
" the Bombay China-men; fhe accordingly cruized
" in the Straits until three of them arrived; with
" thefe fhe failed to the weftward, and joined the
" fquadron before we left the coaft of Zelone. The
" whole force being now joined, the Commodore
" failed for Anjango, where he arrived the 3d of
" February. At this place the Royal Charlotte
" and Refolution continued under command of
" Captain Panton, with the Seahorfe and Coventry,

" until

" until the 3d of March, and having there taken
" on board 25 officers, 330 Europeans, and 268
" Seapoys, Lascars, and camp-followers, together
" with the baggage and camp equipage, tumbrels,
" field pieces, &c. we proceeded to Tillicherry,
" where we arrived the 15th of March. On the
" 27th of the same month, the French settlement
" of Mahie capitulated.

" Sir Edward Vernon, thinking it necessary to
" go with the whole of the King's squadron to
" Bombay, left me with the Bengal ships to con-
" duct the army back to Madrass; and on the 6th
" of April I sailed, having on board the Royal
" Charlotte and Resoluton, 42 officers, 554 rank
" and file of the regiment and corps of artillery,
" 49 servants and camp-followers, with their pri-
" vate baggage, arms and accoutrements; as also
" the battering cannon, mortars, shot and shells,
" which had been sent round from Madrass for the
" siege of Mahie: at the same time sailed two
" transports with the Seapoys and camp equipage.
" We arrived at Madrass the 22d of April without
" the loss of a man.

" The Governor and Council then ordered the
" ships to receive on board Colonel Harper and his
" staff, Captain Colville with his battalion of Sea-
" poys, and Captain Jones with his company of
" artillery, 14 officers, 57 Europeans, 800 Seapoys
" and

" and camp-followers, together with their private " and camp equipage, as well as field pieces, am- " munition, tumbrels and ſhot belonging to three " other battalions who were to join them. The " whole was ſafely landed at Mootapilla, and the " ſhips returned into Madraſs Road the 18th of " May. The Reſolution was then diſpatched to " Pondicherry to load ſtores, and the Royal Char- " lotte followed on the ſame ſervice, as ſoon as ſhe " had landed ſome heavy artillery brought round " from Mahie.

" ON the 4th of July, when ſhe was compleatly " filled with Pondicherry ſtores, advice having " been received from Sir Thomas Rumbold, that " that there were French cruizers off the Iſland of " Zelone, I ordered the Reſolution (which ſhip " had come a ſecond time to Pondicherry for " ſtores) to ſail directly in queſt of them, and hav- " ing re-landed the ſtores from the Royal Char- " lotte, followed her the next day. We explored " the whole coaſt of Zelone, from Point Pedro " to the little Baſſes, looked into every port, and " ſpoke with every ſhip we ſaw, without hearing " of French veſſels. We continued cruizing until " the 26th of July, when the Morning Star arrived " from Madraſs with orders for us to return, and " we accordingly did return into Madraſs Road " the 29th. On Auguſt the 4th, the Reſolution " ſailed in company with his Majeſty's ſhip Sea-

" horſe,

" horſe, to convoy the Morſe Indiaman, and four " country ſhips through the Straits of Malacca, " on their way to China. The Royal Charlotte " ſailed the 10th of the ſame month for Bengal, " and on the 28th, juſt one year from the time it " had been hoiſted, her pendant was hauled down. " Such has been the ſervice the Bengal ſhips have " rendered the Company in the courſe of the year.

" HAD the Company been to have paid freight " to private ſhips, for tranſporting the troops and " ſtores, which the Bengal ſhips ſo ſafely and expe- " ditiouſly carried from place to place for them, " it would, excluſive of inconvenience, have coſt " them great ſums.

" Captain Roddam received 7000 pagodas, for " carrying 500 Seapoys from Tillicherry to Ma- " draſs. The Bengal ſhips tranſported at different " times, 1065 Europeans and 1117 Seapoys and " camp-followers. In tranſport-ſtowage, two of the " former are deemed equal to three of the latter, ſo " that credit ſhould have been given to the Bengal " ſhips, for tranſporting 2714 Seapoys, which at " 7000 pagodas for 500, comes to 37,996 pagodas, " or Arcot rupees 138,685.

" CAPTAIN Jameſon received 500 pagodas for " carrying military ſtores from Madraſs to Tilli- " cherry, and had beſides the Royal Admiral to

" convoy

" convoy him. The Bengal ſhips tranſported five " times the ſame quantity of military ſtores from " one place to another; which eſtimated at the " ſame rate, comes to 25,000 pagodas, or Arcot " rupees 91,250. The ſhips have therefore ſaved " ſaved the Company 229,935 Arcot rupees, in " freight only.

" They were fitted out avowedly to ſupport the " King's ſquadron. Sir Edward Vernon, on their " junction with his ſhips, declared himſelf fully " ſatisfied with the ſtate and condition of the Royal " Charlotte and Reſolution. In his public letter " to the Miniſtry, he acknowledges the readineſs " and activity of the Governor General and Coun- " cil of Bengal, in ſending him ſo capital and " timely a reinforcement. Mr. Belcombe, the " French Governor of Pondicherry, on ſeeing the " Bengal ſhips join the King's ſquadron, then " blocking up his port, declared that all his hopes " of relief by ſea were over, as the Engliſh ſqua- " dron had been ſo ſtrongly reinforced. The " King's Commanding Officer, and the Preſidency " of Madraſs, unſolicited, vouched for the ſervices " rendered the public, by the equipment of the " Royal Charlotte and Reſolution. The ſervice " over, the ſhips were reduced, without leaving " any dead weight on the Company, except " taking a few of the officers into the ſervice as " cadets, may be deemed ſuch.

" Let

"Let the acknowledged ſervices of the ſhips, "and what they and their ſtores will ſell for, be "placed againſt their firſt coſt and outfit, and let "the the ſum ſaved to the Company by their "tranſport ſervice, be ſet againſt their expences "ſince they left Bengal, and it will be found, "that the ſhips Royal Charlotte and Reſolution, "ſtand not much indebted to their owners."

THAT you had ſeen the above paper, when you made the obſervation of the ſhips under my command having rendered the Company no ſervices, is moſt probable; becauſe in another part of your minute you ſay, "I am told that Captain Price aſ- "ſiſted at the reduction of Pondicherry and Ma- "hie, and that his ſhips were employed in carrying "troops and ſtores to and fro, which in truth is "fitter employment for tranſports than ſhips of "war."

I HAVE heard, Sir, that you was a Clerk to ſome military man, at the affair of St. Cas: during that unfortunate expedition you might have learnt, that when the military and marine force of a ſtate are to act in conjunction on an expedition where it is neceſſary to embark the troops, then, in that caſe, ſhips of war are the ſafeſt and beſt to be employed in tranſporting as many of the ſoldiers as they can with ſafety ſtow; and that for ſuch reaſons as you muſt know, though it did not ſuit your purpoſe to own. In India and in Europe, it

was thought a matter of great importance, that the French ſhould be driven off the continent of India; and I maintain it for a fact, that, but for the Seahorſe and Coventry King's ſhips, and the Royal Charlotte and Reſolution Bengal armed ſhips, the army which marched acroſs the continent from the Coromandel to the Malabar Coaſt, could not have been tranſported from Anjango to Tillicherry for the reduction of Mahie. When that place had capitulated, letters were received from the Governor and Council of Madraſs, couched in the moſt preſſing terms, to the ſea and land commanders, to ſend back the regiment of infantry and corps of artillery to the coaſt. The Bengal ſhips took them on board, with all the officers, battering cannon, tumbrels, field pieces, and every particular of military ſtores, and in ſixteen days landed them ſafely, and without the loſs of a man, at the Preſidency of Madraſs. This was a piece of ſervice that neither influence nor money could have effected until the next ſeaſon, had the Bengal ſhips not been at hand to execute it: nor at any future time, could tranſports for the troops, or wholſome proviſion to have maintained them on the way to Madraſs, have been procured, but at a greater expence to the ſervice, than the equipment of the Bengal ſhips coſt the Company. All this, I ſuppoſe, you knew, and much more. You had been told it; you had read of it in variety of forms: but your ſpleen to an individual, induced you,

you, not only to repeat, but to suffer to remain on the face of the Company's records, the abominable untruth, "That you had never heard, that the "ships commanded by Captain Price, had rendered "the Company any services!"

Your question, "Did Captain Price ever fire a "gun, but in salutes?" may be answered by another question equally pertinent. Did Admiral Darby, with more than twenty sail of the line, in sailing along the hostile coast of France and Spain, to the relief of Gibraltar, in the course of that expedition, ever fire a gun? yet the throwing supplies into that garrison, as well as the taking of the fortresses of Pondicherry and of Mahie, may be deemed public services, though neither the King's or Company's ships ever fired a gun in effecting the relief of the one, or the reduction of the other.

There is, Sir, in all your remarks on this occasion, so strong a bias to inveterate calumny, that I shall not thank you for the aukward compliment, relative to my being a man of spirit, which seems to have been extorted from your fears of consequences, should I ever come to the knowledge of your illiberality. You talk, Sir, "Of "the enormous expence of fitting out the ships "commanded by Captain Price, and what the "Company will think of it, when it shall come to

"be

"be ſtated!" I never had a wiſh that any part of my conduct ſhould be ſecreted. Why, Sir, when you had this matter fully in your power, when it was doubly your duty, firſt, as a Member of the Council, and ſecondly, as Inſpector General of the Company's accounts, did you not point out ſome one or more articles of enormous expence, incurred by my management?—but that would have been open and fair, and I ſhould have had an opportunity to refute your aſſertions on the ſpot; a thing you never intended.

This may not be an improper place, to inform others as well as yourſelf, how ſome of your dark proceedings have come to light.

Towards the end of the laſt, and the beginning of the preſent year, a number of anonymous pamphlets, under various denominations, were publiſhed on India affairs, declared to be made up of fair and juſt Extracts from the Proceedings of the Governor General and Council of Bengal, &c. &c. In theſe productions the moſt flattering encomiums are laviſhed on the abilities, the integrity, and the unwearied application of Mr. Philip Francis; and the utmoſt ſcurrility and unjuſtifiable abuſe, vented on the Governor General. However, at length, this hardy veteran exceeded his commiſſion, and amongſt numberleſs other falſehoods, aſſerted roundly, that the Royal Charlotte coſt the Company

Company 57,000 rupees in ballasting only. This was coming to the point. I called upon him openly, and under my proper signature, in a letter to the Court of Directors, to come forward and support his assertion; but he and his publications were no more heard of. I had a suspicion that the author had been employed by you, and that the mutilated and partial extracts from the Company's books, had been obtained in India; but by what channel, or by whose means, was the question. I was personally known to, and intimately acquainted with, every one of the young gentlemen, who, at the transactions mentioned in the extracts alluded to, passed the Board, were Secretaries, deputy Secretaries, or Assistants, in the different offices from whence such extracts could have been obtained, but no part of their conduct or character in life, would justify the most distant suspicion or insinuation, that any one of them would have been guilty of a breach of trust and perjury, in giving extracts from their masters books, and thereby betraying their secrets, without their knowledge, and contrary to their orders: but I found no kind of difficulty in admitting into my mind, that you might have been the man, who, contrary to your oath, and perhaps to your allegiance, furnished the materials for the above publications. Your general stamp of character, your notorious personal enmity to the Governor General, and your impatient ambition to obtain, what I think you never will be entrusted with, the Government of Bengal, too

plainly

too plainly marked the man, who was capable of uſhering into the world, at the expence of a breach of the firſt moral obligation, productions infamous in the extreme; tending to vilify the character of a man, whoſe abilities you envy, and whoſe integrity you have not the virtue to imitate.

THERE is a degree of rancour to Mr. Haſtings, which runs through theſe productions, that induced me at firſt to ſuppoſe, that they might have been drawn up by yourſelf, and my long experience of the extenſive prevalence of your abſurd and ridiculous vanity, left me no cauſe to doubt but that you had been your own encomiaſt. But there is a chain of ignorance in Aſiatic politics, which pervades the digreſſive parts of thoſe wretched productions, that made me heſitate at the idea of their being compleatly fitted for the preſs by your own hands. I was therefore obliged to ſeek for a commentator, or, at leaſt, an editor of your works, and I was lucky enough to find one that removed all my doubts.

THE man I mean (for I will not proſtitute the appellation of gentleman, to a being who has been capable of undertaking ſo unworthy an employment) lately returned from India. How he got there is no part of my preſent buſineſs to enquire; there he has been, and reſided in Bengal from Auguſt, 1779, until the month of March, 1780; during which time, having no employment in the

Company's ſervice, or any knowledge of, or intereſt in, their affairs, he applied for employment to the Governor General, to Mr. Barwell, and even was extremely obliged to me. How he has repaid it, the above falſe aſſertion relative to the ballaſting of the Royal Charlotte (whether of your fabrication or of his own, I know not) will prove. But as congenial ſouls, like the magnet and the needle, or the amber and the ſtraw, attract each other, you ſoon met; and finding him a man after your own heart, you employed him in much dirty work, which, to ſay the truth, he has executed as well as you could have done it yourſelf. In a Letter like this, which I intend for the public eye, and to the publication of which, I am impelled by a love to truth, and a juſtifiable ſpirit of reſentment for unmerited injuries offered, retracted, and again aſſerted, I would leave as little as poſſible to conjecture, inſinuation, or initials. But here I am withheld from giving the name of your agent at full length, in commiſeration to the diſtreſſes of his family, and the ruined ſtate of his affairs.

I KNOW not to the miſmanagement of which of you it ought to be placed, that an honeſt man has the juſtifiable pleaſure to behold you entangled in that kind of embarraſſment common enough to ſuch a confederacy. You durſt not jointly avouch, or jointly deny, your having purloined the extracts

from

from the Company's proceedings abroad, or the publication of them at home. When you ſhall read the above paragraph, in conjunction, I beg leave to give a hint to both: Be cautious of truſting each other; for you, Mr. W. M. accepted a commiſſion to publiſh a falſehood againſt a man to whoſe humanity and generoſity you had been highly obliged; and you, Mr. Francis, uttered an untruth againſt the ſame man, which your fear of chaſtiſement induced you to retract, though your baſeneſs afterwards permitted it to be entered on the Company's proceedings. The nature and tendency of this very humane obſervation of Mr. Philip Francis, ſhall be quoted, explained, and commented on, before I cloſe this Letter.

You have been pleaſed to ſay, that, "It is a "fact of public notoriety, that Captain Price has "paid his debts, and made his fortune, by his voy"age to the coaſt and back again."

This extraordinary aſſertion having been made in the preſence of two men, who were your compeers, one of them who had known me near thirty years, and the other twenty, reprobated the abſurdity and injuſtice, of dragging into public debate, the private concerns of any man. This friendly intimation induced you to ſay, "It is no aſperſion on "the character of any man, to ſay that he has paid "his debts. But on the ſtrength of Mr. Barwell's

 "authority,

" authority, I retract that part of my minute; as " to his fortune, I conclude it to be independent, " becaufe the eftablifhment and advantages an- " nexed to his command, gave him the means of " making it fo; becaufe he has not leffened it by " paying his debts, and becaufe he is actually " preparing to retire to England, which no " man in a notorious ftate of poverty would " think of."

Is this the language, the refult of candid dif-quifition and charitable conclufion! or the effect of prejudice and perfonal refentment? If the for-mer, why apologize for, or retract it at all? If the latter, why, after your paffions had had time to fubfide, and you were advifed by a particular friend of your own, of my particular reafons for going to Europe; why, I afk, Sir, when you knew all this, and thought proper fo far to condefcend as to commiffion your friend to quiet my fears, did you permit fuch obfervations as the above, and many others, equally perfonal, to remain on the Company's records? But you have done it; and a gentleman, who has claims on me as a pri-vate perfon, hath fent me copies of your minutes for explanation.

I SHALL defend myfelf, Sir, in the beft manner I can, and I dare your utmoft malice to refute a fingle particle of what I have faid, or fhall fay.

If,

If, in this defence, I mix a little gall with my ink, no man, who has ſenſibility enough to feel the bitterneſs of an injury agravated to inſult, will blame my ſeverity of recrimination. In two things, I promiſe not to follow your example; I ſhall ſay nothing but what I know, or moſt ſolemnly believe to be true; any part of which, if I am ever induced to recant, I ſhall never ſtoop to the meanneſs of repeating it again.

As you indiſcriminately oppoſed, *from a ſpirit of faction*, every meaſure of Mr. Haſtings's adminiſtration, your concurrence could not be expected in a meaſure ſo laudable and ſo acceptable to the whole of the Engliſh inhabitants of India in general, and of Calcutta in particular, as the equipping of two forty gun ſhips, to reinforce the King's ſquadron. But the plan itſelf has been applauded, and the execution approved, by the King's officer then in command in India, and its utility and actual ſervices pointed out by the government of Madraſs, in a ſtile and manner that would have ſilenced any man but yourſelf. But I forget; your whole purſuit has been to aſſert new falſehoods, and not to loſe time in defending old ones. The ſhips had ſailed; executed every thing that could be reaſonably expected from them; had returned, and were paid off. Then it was, that you diſcovered that they had done nothing, during the twelve months that they were in commiſſion; that the

the eſtabliſhment was enormous; from which, in the ſpace of one year, on a voyage with them to the coaſt, Captain Price had made his fortune; had, or had not, paid his debts, (for either ſide of a falſehood will ſuit the purpoſe of inveterate malice,) and was going to Europe; which no man would do, that was notoriouſly in a ſtate of poverty.

Be pleaſed to remember, Sir, (for you are cruelly apt to forget every thing which leads to truth, to honour, or to juſtice) that I did not buy either of the ſhips, that I fitted out but one of them, which was the ſhip I commanded myſelf; that what marine ſtores were wanted, and could be found in the Company's warehouſes, were to be taken from thence; ſo of military ſtores, ſo of proviſions, and ſo of every thing elſe, which the Company had of their own. The pay of the Captains was the very ſame as had been received by the men who had commanded the ſhips whilſt in the merchants ſervice, including their privilege: the Lieutenants had wages calculated on the ſame equitable principle, and equivalent to that paid to officers in private employments. The mates, midſhipmen, warrant officers, tradeſmen, and common ſeamen, were paid exactly as perſons in ſimilar employments in the Company's pilot ſervice. The allowance of proviſion in the King's ſervice, was made the ſtandard for European ſeamen; that for Laſ-

cars, regulated by the cuſtom of the country; and all this ſubject to the orders, checks, and controuls, by which ſuch expences are regulated in his Majeſty's ſhips of war. Such, Sir, was the eſtabliſhment. A month was allowed me to prepare the ſhips, but they were ready to proceed to ſea on the 26th day. You and Mr. Wheler accompanied the Governor General to view them. At that time, I heard nothing of complaint; on the reverſe, all was commendation and expreſſions of ſurprize, that two ſuch capital ſhips, ſo fitted, ſo armed, and ſo manned, could be prepared for ſea in ſo ſhort a time, at Bengal.

With my commiſſion, I received a letter from the Secretary, informing me, that the Governor General and Council, had thought proper to order me an allowance of 700 rupees per month, for ſuch ſtores and proviſions as it might be neceſſary to purchaſe abroad for the uſe of the ſhips. I was permitted to draw a commiſſion, ſimilar to that drawn by the ſeveral ſtore-keepers and commiſſaries employed by the Company on ſhore: The accumulated ſums allowed me for wages, table allowance, and commiſſion, from the fitting out of the ſhips to their final diſcharge, amounted to current rupees, thirty-ſix thouſand five hundred ſeventy-five, ſix annas, and ten pice, 36,575 6ans. 10pi.

I have

I HAVE not been thus circumſtantial, in compliment to you, Mr. Francis: there are others who have a right to aſk, and wiſh to know what you mean, when you aſſert, that, "I have admitted "that he (Price) has not paid his debts; and if "has not made his fortune, I am ſure it will appear from the immoderate eſtabliſhment fixed "for him, and the obvious advantages attending "ſuch a command, that he might have done it. "If theſe emoluments were thrown in his way by "government, it is no aſperſion of his character, "to ſuppoſe, that he availed himſelf of them. It "never yet was imputed as ſuch, to the commanders of his Majeſty's ſhips."

WHAT the eſtabliſhment was, is fairly ſtated above; and I wiſh you would aſſiſt me with ſome of your penetration, to diſcover how it might be made to extend to anſwer all the purpoſes you mention. When you ſpeak of availing myſelf of obvious advantages, do you mean defrauding the Company of their ſtores, or cheating the people of their proviſions? Neither King's nor Company's officers, can draw any advantages, not clearly aſcertained and fully expreſſed in their orders and commiſſions, without a breach of an oath, or what is equally dear to an officer, his honour. Againſt inſinuation of that kind, I feel myſelf invulnerable; though they are ſuch as might reaſonably be expected

pected from your education, your principles, and, as I shall prove, your practice.

"Man, know thyself," is a most excellent precept; though I believe few people existing, know their own characters so imperfectly as you do yours; this may be owing to an uninterrupted flow of good fortune, and an immoderate quantity of vanity, which, together with power, is very apt to magnify a man's own self-importance, to a degree of intolerable insolence, insufferable to all around him.

Permit me now to quote a fact, and compare it with one of yours. When the Act of Parliament passed, which took place in Bengal, August the 1st, 1774, General Clavering, Colonel Monson, and Philip Francis, were appointed Members of the Council, and there being but two other Members, who were selected from the Company's old servants, the three new ones being a majority, and having the whole power in their hands, agreed to draw together, in all political measures. It happened that a clause in the same act which gave into their hands full power over the kingdom of Bengal, and every sixpence of the property in that country of a body of merchants, who knew them not, did at the same time stipulate and ordain, that they, Clavering, Monson, and Francis, should be paid out of the said Company's Treasury

ſury at Bengal, each ſeparately, and for his own uſe, as a Counſellor *only*, the ſum of ten thouſand pounds ſterling, without mentioning the exchange. Sometime after they arrived, they came to a reſolution, at what exchange the current rupee (a denomination which exiſts only in imagination, and is made up from other denominations of real pieces of ſilver, as our pound ſterling is of twenty ſhillings) ſhould be paid to them, and they agreed to receive it at two ſhillings the current rupee; that is, ten current rupees for the pound ſterling; and of courſe, every member did then, and ever after, receive at Bengal, one hundred thouſand current rupees annually, as equivalent to ten thouſand pounds; for we have no ſterling money there.

In the ſame Act of Parliament, the ſervants of the Eaſt India Company abroad, were confined to drawing on the Company at home, for three hundred thouſand pounds annually, *and no more*. And of that ſum I believe, the portion of the Bengal Preſidency was limited by the Court of Directors to one hundred thouſand pounds.

What is it that our unſpotted triumvirate of rigid inquiſitors do, but agree amongſt themſelves, that the very money they had decreed, ſhould be paid to them out of the Treaſury, at two ſhillings the current rupee, ſhould alſo be received back

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into the Treaſury for bills on the Company, at the enhanced value of two ſhillings and one penny.

A MAN who takes from his Majeſty's Exchequer a guinea, and puts down twenty ſhillings, robs him of five per cent. The fraud in which you was concerned, Mr. Francis, amounted to ten pence in the pound, on a hundred thouſand pounds, or, four thouſand one hundred ſixty-ſix pounds, thirteen ſhillings, and four pence, (4166l. 13s. 4d.) Now for the application. After I had reſided in India eight-and-twenty years, with the Company's permiſſion, never once having infringed their general orders, or acted contrary to their by-laws; after having paid into their Treaſuries, at their different ſettlements, as duties on fair trade, more money than you, Mr. Francis, ever received, honeſtly, from them, (notwithſtanding your allowance of ten thouſand pounds a year for your ſervices) after having aſſiſted to deſtroy their enemies and ſupport their flag, and contributed in more inſtances than one, to extend their trade, I was called upon to equip and command two forty gun ſhips, to reinforce the King's ſquadron, which I executed to the ſatisfaction of the Admiral, as well as the Preſidency of Madraſs, and Government of Bengal. You are influenced by the malice of your heart, contrary to your own double promiſe of retraction, to aſſure the Company, that

the eſtabliſhment fixed for Captain Price, enabled him to pay his debts, make a fortune, and come to Europe, when the whole ſum which I did receive (and on that my brother Captain had a claim) amounted to the ſum of three thouſand ſix hundred and fifty-ſeven pounds, (3,657l.) ſomething leſs than you cheated them of, by a daſh of your pen, and ſomething more than one third of your annual ſalary, for which you have impeded, perplexed, and confounded all their affairs at Bengal, for ſix years together.

Never did three men exclaim more againſt peculation, and uncandid repreſentation, than General Clavering, Colonel Monſon, and Mr. Francis did; and even now, when their names are mentioned, the moſt uncharitable compariſons are drawn between them, and men, at leaſt, as faithful ſervants of the Company, as ever they were. I reverence the maxim that directs us to ſpeak well of the dead, as much as any man, and had Mr. Francis been dead, all my injuries ſhould have been buried in oblivion. But he is alive, and on the ground where we are both equal, and may defend himſelf. As to his colleagues, I was obliged to mention their names, when I was reduced to give an inſtance of the looſe adminiſtration of Mr. Francis, and the reſt of the majority, in defence of myſelf, againſt a man who has attempted to deſtroy

ſtroy my credit with the Company, and with my private friends.

If the fact which I have ſtated, doth not ſtand the ſevereſt teſt of examination, my credit muſt fall; if it doth, I can aſſure the friends of the deceaſed gentlemen, that it is not in tenderneſs to Mr. Francis, that I do not publiſh to the world, a ſeries of facts collected during the violent adminiſtration of the triumvirate, which would expoſe the principles on which they acted, more clearly than hath hitherto appeared. The living man is now my only enemy, and I am always at his ſervice.

I know your abilities and great dexterity in the arrangement of words, for the purpoſe of making the worſe appear the better cauſe. Much do you owe to the nation and to the Eaſt India Company, as well as to individuals,, for the time you have miſpent, and the paper you have waſted, in entering up *unſupported aſſertions, myſterious alluſions, and barbarous inſinuations*, againſt the honour of the Company's old ſervants on the face of their conſultations; where they will for ever remain monuments of the diſingenuity of your diſpoſition, and the depravity of your heart.

I am aware that you will ſay, *It is a ſtanding order of the Eaſt India Company, that whatever ar-*

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guments may have been used by their servants abroad in defence of, or dissent from, any measure debated at the Council Board, shall remain on their consultations for the information of the Court of Directors.

WITHOUT making a question whether a chit-chat conversation in one of the settlements, relative to the private concerns of an individual, can be of use to the Directors or not, I beg leave to put you in mind, that that particular order of the Company, was not always attended to by Mr. Francis.

ONCE on a time, when you, and the two other Members of the Council, who formed the majority of the administration in the government of Bengal (until the death of Colonel Monson) had it in contemplation to send an Ambassador to the Maharatta Court, at Poonah, some difference in opinion arose, on the propriety of the measure, between you and one of your friends. Much reasoning was used, and many observations were urged and recorded, *pro* and *con*. Both sides grew warm. Political friendship, the only cement of your apparent good understanding, proved too weak to controul the unruly passions of men, who privately detested each other; and you fell inadvertently into that chain of allusive, vindictive scurrility and abuse of one another, which marks the

the whole of your correſpondence with the Company at that period, reflecting on the Governor General and former adminiſtration. The other member of the majority, dreading the conſequences of a total breach amongſt yourſelves, put you in mind of a famous ſcene in the Beggars Opera. Self-intereſt, that univerſal peace-maker, ſtept in very cordially to your relief. Hands were ſhaken, apologies made, and the whole debate ſtruck off from the Company's records.

Be pleaſed to ſay, in what point of view, your very candid and charitable remarks on the perſonal intentions and private concerns of Captain Price, could convey more uſeful information to the Court of Directors, than your very warm and very honeſt opinion of each other's principles, and ſecret motives of action, would have done, had you permitted thoſe minutes to have remained on record, as you have done ſuch as related to me. At all events, if conveniency could induce you to obliterate remarks that would have diſhonoured yourſelf, common prudence, and ſome regard to your own promiſe, ought to have operated ſo as to have eraſed the other: but that you ſhould meddle at all with the private misfortunes of an individual, implies great want of charity; more particularly, as it carries with it, a convincing proof of your having forgot your own. Excuſe me, Sir, for putting

putting you in remembrance, that you have been yourſelf in a ſtate of bankruptcy; and that, had not the Directors of the Eaſt India Company ſupplied you with money to pay your debts, you could not have benefited of your parliamentary appointment in their ſervice.

HAVING now fully proved, to the ſatisfaction, I hope, of every impartial perſon, that you have aſſerted falſehoods, retracted them, and then re-aſſerted them, I have done with you, on my own part, and the world will judge, what credit is due to the aſſertions of a man of ſuch a character. But if you wiſh to have your public conduct laid before the world, I fancy you will not be diſappointed in this reſpect; for there is great ſtore of rich materials in the Company's records, to which to apply; and no ſcanty pittance of biographical anecdote to embelliſh the digreſſive parts of ſuch a work. How a man, ſo every way open to attack, and at the ſame time ſo ſuperlatively endowed with political cunning, as Mr. Francis is well known to be, ſhould be ſo much off his guard, as to juſtify the compilation of ſo curious a piece of Aſiatic hiſtory, is not eaſy to ſay. Whether I ſhall be at the trouble to digeſt the materials into form, and give them, a penny-worth, to the public, will depend on circumſtances. As for

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this little piece, it has been drawn up on a ſelf-defenſive principle, and to ſatisfy ſome interested individuals, who ſeem much inclined to believe the idle ſtories recorded, if not invented, by Mr. Francis, againſt me.

As to the Proprietors of Eaſt India Stock, and the Directors of the Company's affairs, they have before them innumerable inſtances of his manner of calumniating their old and ſuperior ſervants, by inſidious implication, conſtantly repeated, but never proved: and I truſt, that nothing he, or his ſcribes, can ſay of me, will prove a bar to my hopes of ſome employment in their ſervice.

I HAVE cautiouſly avoided entering into matters relative to his conduct in private life, though I feel myſelf warranted to ſay, that he has, for ſome years paſt, been conſidered at Bengal, as a diſturber of the peace of private families, and a peſt to ſociety.

IF the language I have uſed, is thought to be too pointed or ſevere, I can only ſay, that ſince I have heard that the perſonal reflections uſed by Mr. Francis in his minutes at Bengal (and which he had retracted) remained ſtill on the Company's records at the India Houſe, I felt in my

mind a mixture of resentment, indignation, and contempt, for a man capable of so much duplicity of conduct.

I am,

Sir,

Your humble Servant,

JOSEPH PRICE.

LONDON, *December*, 1781,
No. 1. Corbet Court,
Gracechurch Street.